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SUBJECT: COLOMBIA: 2004 ANNUAL TERRORISM REPORT

REF: 04 STATE 245841

1. (U) Embassy Bogota's contribution to the 2004 Patterns of Global Terrorism report follows. Responses are keyed to questions in reftel's paragraph 15. Embassy POC is Poloff Dana Brown, (phone) 571-315-2129, unclass email brownaml@state.gov.

2. (SBU) (A) SUPPORT FOR THE GLOBAL COALITION AGAINST TERRORISM: The Government of Colombia continued to support the Global War Against Terrorism through bilateral, multilateral, military, and economic activities against three domestic terrorist groups -- the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), the National Liberation Army (ELN), and the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC) -- that have been designated by the United States as Foreign Terrorist Organizations. In 2004, Colombia continued to work with neighboring countries to combat terrorist expansion, investigate terrorist activities outside Colombia, and bring terrorists to justice.

(SBU) B) HOST NATION COUNTERTERRORISM ACTIONS:

DIPLOMATIC: Colombia has signed eight of the international conventions and protocols relating to terrorism and is party to six. The remaining four are in different stages of the Congressional ratification process. The Colombian Government issued a statement condemning the alleged paramilitary plot against Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez in May. Colombia also supported the Venezuelans by releasing prison records and criminal information on all individuals arrested.

LAW ENFORCEMENT: The U.S.-Colombia extradition relationship continued to be the most successful one we have; Colombia extradited 90 fugitives to the United States in 2004. The Colombian Government remained fully cooperative in cases and investigations involving Americans; it sought an exchange of hostages held by the FARC to release the three U.S. citizens kidnapped in February 2003. In December, Colombia extradited Gilberto Rodriguez-Orejuela, who founded the Cali drug cartel in the 1970s and at one point was responsible for 80 percent of the global cocaine trade. In late December, the GOC also extradited Juvenal Oviedo Ricardo Palmera, "Simon Trinidad," the most senior FARC commander ever held by the Colombians, to the United States on charges of kidnapping, providing material support to terrorists and narcotics trafficking. The threat of extradition has been cited as a significant concern for leaders of the FARC, ELN, and AUC.

INTELLIGENCE: In 2004, all adult terrorist group deserters were debriefed by the military for detailed information on their terrorist cell before they entered the demobilization/reinsertion program. Moreover, the 3,000 AUC members demobilized in the collective events have given useful information about their organizational structure and culture during Government processing.

FINANCIAL ASSETS: The Colombian Government fully cooperated in blocking terrorist assets. Throughout 2004, the Colombian Financial Information and Analysis Unit (UIAF) assisted the U.S. Embassy and the Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) in closing suspicious bank accounts. In August, the Colombian military, police, and investigative units combined efforts to produce an estimate of FARC finances. The GOC planned to continue this research and expand it to include the two other main terrorist groups in Colombia. In September, the U.S. Secret Service and the Colombian National Police seized 3.6 million counterfeit U.S. dollars from the FARC, which had planned to use it for weapons and explosives purchases. The Colombian Government also took steps to reorganize and streamline its Inter-Institutional Committee Against Subversive Finances.

MILITARY: President Uribe increased military pressure on illegal armed groups in 2004, facilitating the military's nation-wide campaign to retake national territory. Although FARC-dominated southern Colombia was the primary target for the inter-service military action, the military also carried out actions against the ELN and the AUC throughout the year.

(SBU) C) HOST NATION LAW ENFORCEMENT, INTELLIGENCE/SECURITY SERVICE, AND MILITARY ACTIONS TAKEN AGAINST AL-QAIDA AND

OTHER TERRORIST GROUPS; ENACTMENT OF NEW PERTINENT CT LAWS, EXECUTIVE ORDERS, OR REGULATORY ACTIONS: There were no GOC actions taken against Al-Qaida in 2004 but the military conducted ongoing actions against the FARC, ELN, and AUC as outlined in (B), (J) and (Q). Military and police units around the country seized weapons caches, impounded narcotics stocks, infiltrated abandoned FARC camps, and rescued kidnap victims. In August, Congress approved a major anti-terrorism statute that would have allowed the Government to conduct wiretaps, search residences, and detain suspects more easily. In September, however, the Constitutional Court found the statute unconstitutional and struck it down before implementation. The Government drafted a "Law of Justice and Reparations," which would offer alternative sentences, including mandatory prison time and victim reparation, to former members of illegal armed groups who committed serious crimes prior to demobilizing. It will be presented to Congress in 2005.

(SBU) D) RESPONSE OF THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM TO ACTS OF INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM AND/OR SIGNIFICANT ACTS OF DOMESTIC TERRORISM DURING 2004: As detailed in answer B, GOC authorities had successful extradition processes with the United States and other nations. Colombia requested the Government of Chile to extradite FARC front leader Jairo Cuarn Collazos, who was issued a one-year resident visa in November. Colombia also requested the Cuban Government to extradite Luis Fernando Gomez Bustamante, a narcotics trafficker arrested in Cuba. There was no impediment to extradition for terrorist acts occurring outside Colombia.

(U) E) HOST NATION LAW ENFORCEMENT CAPABILITIES, SPECIFICALLY IN SURVEILLANCE, INTEL COLLECTION, AND INVESTIGATION: Colombian law allows wire, oral, and electronic communications interception by the security forces and law enforcement officials with the permission of a prosecutor.

(SBU) F) HOST GOVERNMENT EFFORTS TO INVESTIGATE TERRORIST INCIDENTS OR ASSIST WITH INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM INVESTIGATIONS, TO REDUCE THE ABILITY OF TERRORISTS TO CROSS NATIONAL BORDERS: The Colombian Government was generally willing to assist in investigations of terrorist activity by Colombians in bordering nations. Border controls remained weak to non-existent, however, and neighboring countries routinely complained that both illegal armed group members and displaced persons crossed the borders unhindered. The GOC entity responsible for immigration controls, the Administrative Department of Security (DAS) entered into a cooperative agreement with Diplomatic Security and Department of Homeland Security offices at post to form a vetted investigation unit to combat identity document fraud and alien smuggling.

(U) G) MAJOR COUNTERTERRORISM EFFORTS UNDERTAKEN IN 2004 BY THE HOST GOVERNMENT, INCLUDING STEPS TAKEN IN INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL FORA: See (A), (B).

(U) H) DEVELOPMENTS IN HOST NATION CT EFFORTS, FOCUSING ON ANY NEW ORGANIZATIONS OR PROCESSES CREATED, TO INCLUDE EFFORTS TO UPGRADE BORDER AND MARITIME SECURITY: In early December, the Army announced a new Caribbean Joint Command center for military operations along the north coast of Colombia. The new command will coordinate Army, Navy and Air Force operations along the Caribbean, making the maritime border more secure and improving operations against terrorists in the area. Brazil and Colombia signed an aerial interdiction agreement similar the US-Colombia Air Bridge Denial Program.

(U) I) EFFORTS TO COMBAT EXTREMIST, VIOLENCE-SUPPORTING IDEOLOGY, BOTH BY GOVERNMENT AND CIVIL OR RELIGIOUS SOCIETY. See (B), (C) and (D).

(SBU) J) IDENTIFY WHERE HOST GOVERNMENT HAS DEPLOYED MILITARY OR PARAMILITARY FORCES FOR COMBAT, COUNTER INSURGENCY OR CT ACTIVITIES: The Colombian Armed forces fought the FARC, ELN, and paramilitaries throughout Colombia. The largest coordinated campaign in Colombian history, Plan Patriota, focused on the FARC in south-central Colombia, but other forces and police units were active in every department in the country against all illegal armed groups.

(U) K) DESCRIBE MAJOR CHANGES, POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE, IN THE HOST GOVERNMENT'S STANCE TOWARDS TERRORISM, INTERNATIONAL OR DOMESTIC: The GOC continued its hard stance against terrorists throughout 2004. Uribe's Administration, inaugurated in 2002, entered office on a "get tough with terrorists" platform and has maintained its focus to demobilize or defeat Colombia's terrorist groups.

(SBU) L) CONSTRAINTS ON CT PERFORMANCE, INCLUDING LACK OF CAPACITY OR POLITICAL WILL: The Government of Colombia remained focused on combating thousands of terrorists domestically but lacked both the military and financial resources to extend the fight to outside terrorist organizations. Colombia made extraordinary progress against terrorism in 2004 by processing more than 6,000 deserters of

illegal armed groups and over 3,000 paramilitaries in a collective demobilization program. However, continued success will require significant financial and military resources. The GOC has requested assistance from the international community to help support demobilization and peace process programs. Politically, the Colombian public became increasingly divided over the controversial issues of "humanitarian exchange" (a guerrilla-GOC prisoner swap) and extradition ) two issues that could influence the GOC's future negotiations with illegal armed groups.

(SBU) M) HOST GOVERNMENT SUPPORT (OFFICIAL AND UNOFFICIAL) FOR INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM, TERRORISTS, OR TERRORIST GROUPS: The Uribe Administration maintained ) in both theory and practice - its position against terrorism, and continually condemned all terrorist actions. Select members of Congress, however, showed sympathies for either the paramilitaries, the ELN, or the FARC. One result was a Congressional invitation for AUC leaders to address the plenary session in July and imprisoned ELN leader Francisco Galan was released for one day to address Congress in June. Nevertheless, members of Congress usually limited any signs of support to unofficial actions.

(U) N) PUBLIC STATEMENTS IN SUPPORT OF A TERRORIST-SUPPORTING COUNTRY ON A TERRORISM ISSUE. (THE SIX GOVERNMENTS DESIGNATED BY THE SECRETARY AS STATE SPONSORS OF TERRORISM ARE CUBA, IRAN, LIBYA, NORTH KOREA, SUDAN, AND SYRIA.) None.

(U) O) STATUS OF TERRORIST ACTIVITY IN HOST COUNTRY, INCLUDING EXISTENCE OF TERRORIST ORGANIZATIONS, THEIR GOALS AND HOW THEY FIT INTO REGIONAL OR GLOBAL EFFORTS: Terrorist groups were once again active throughout the country in 2004. Car bombs, kidnapping, political murders, the indiscriminate use of landmines and economic sabotage were common occurrences.

FARC: The FARC continued to pursue terrorist and narcotrafficking activities despite the military campaign against them. Although 2004 was a relatively "quiet" year for the FARC, the group still executed significant attacks in urban areas. The FARC bombed a popular nightclub in Apartado, Antioquia Department killing five and injuring almost 100 in May. In August, a suspected FARC bombing of Medellin's annual flower festival injured 35 in the Antioquia capital. The FARC orchestrated an attempted mass kidnapping in February at an upper-class condominium complex in Neiva, Huila Department (one hostage was released two months later and three remain in captivity). The group also kidnapped seven people on Christmas Eve in Antioquia Department and massacred 16 for suspected paramilitary sympathies on New Year's Eve. Both the FARC and ELN continued attacks against the country's infrastructure and oil pipelines in 2003, albeit at reduced levels.

ELN: In June, the ELN showed some signs of being willing to negotiate with the GOC using the Mexican Government as a mediator. The group continues fighting but has limited resources and dwindling membership. The most noteworthy ELN terrorist act of the year was the July kidnapping of the Roman Catholic Bishop of Yopal, allegedly conducted to send a political message to the nation.

AUC and other paramilitaries: The AUC declared a cease-fire in November 2002. Since that time AUC murders and massacres are down by approximately 70 and 80 percent, respectively, according to GOC figures. Although the overall number of displacements caused by paramilitaries fell, paramilitaries continued to forcibly displace civilians residing along key drug and weapons transit corridors or suspected of being guerrilla sympathizers. For example, on April 18, paramilitaries displaced 600, killed 12, and "disappeared" 30 indigenous Wayuu in Bahia Portete, La Guajira Department. In late-June one AUC leader kidnapped former Senator Jose Eduardo Gnecco and his family at an illegal checkpoint on a highway between Magdalena and La Guajira.

(U) P) AREAS IN HOST NATION WHERE TERRORISTS ARE RELATIVELY FREE TO OPERATE (I.E., TERRORIST SANCTUARIES) EITHER BECAUSE HOST GOVERNMENT CANNOT OR WILL NOT INTERVENE: Although the GOC had established a state presence in every municipality by February (under the auspices of President Uribe's Democratic Security Strategy), terrorists used remote jungle areas, poor rural and urban municipalities, cattle ranches, and mountain strongholds as operating bases throughout the year.

(SBU) Q) MAJOR CT DEVELOPMENTS INCLUDING ARRESTS, TRIALS AND IMPRISONMENT OF TERRORISTS AND TERRORIST ATTACKS THAT WERE PREVENTED: The FARC had the most killed and captured for the year:

-- Extradited FARC General Staff Member Ricardo Palmera, "Simon Trinidad" (extradited to the U.S. on December 31),

-- Imprisoned FARC drug-runner/financier Omaira

Rojas-Cabrera, "Nayibe Rojas Valderrama" or "Sonia,"

-- Killed FARC Teofilo Forero Mobile Column (TFMC) operations chief Humberto Valbuena, "Yerbas" (replacing El Mocho, killed in 2003),

-- Arrested FARC international liaison chief Rodrigo Granda.

Numerous attacks against President Uribe and urban centers were thwarted by the security forces, but it is impossible to cite a definitive number. The most recent FARC attempt against President Uribe was uncovered by the police on December 15 when they found a cache of 330 pounds of the high explosive anfo intended to be used in a strike against the presidential aircraft during a visit to Cartagena.

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